



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

Representing America's Finest

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EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

July 17, 2017

MICHAEL McHALE
President
Florida Police Benevolent
Association

Mr. Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

JOHN A. FLYNN
Vice President
Patrolmen's Benevolent
Association of New York City

RE: Proceeding Number 15-94

TODD HARRISON
Recording Secretary
Combined Law Enforcement
Association of Texas

Dear Chairman Pai:

SEAN M. SMOOT
Treasurer
Police Benevolent & Protective
Association of Illinois

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), I am submitting comments on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for the creation of a dedicated Emergency Alert System (EAS) event code for Blue Alerts, Proceeding Number 15-94.

MARC KOVAR
Sergeant-at-Arms
New Jersey State Policemen's
Benevolent Association

NAPO is a coalition of police unions and associations from across the United States that serves to advance the interests of America's law enforcement through legislative and legal advocacy, political action, and education. Founded in 1978, NAPO now represents more than 1,000 police units and associations, 241,000 sworn law enforcement officers, and more than 100,000 citizens who share a common dedication to fair and effective crime control and law enforcement.

CRAIG D. LALLY
Executive Secretary
Los Angeles Police
Protective League

NAPO strongly supported the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act, which was named after New York City Police Department Officers and NAPO members Ramos and Liu, who were assassinated while serving their communities. Their killer posted threats to law enforcement on social media before the attack. The implementation of a fully operational National Blue Alert Network will be a vital tool that helps ensure information on credible threats, like that posted by the individual who killed Officers Ramos and Liu, is quickly and widely disseminated so that officers have advanced warning, and can apprehend the criminal before he or she can do more harm.

JAMES PALMER
Parliamentarian
Wisconsin Professional Police
Association

According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 135 officers were killed in the line of duty in 2016, 64 of whom were shot and killed. 21 of those gun-related deaths were by ambush – the officers were targeted and killed simply because they were police officers. This was a 167% increase in ambush-style killings of law enforcement officers over the previous year. In many of these cases, the individuals posted imminent and credible threats to law enforcement officers on social media. A functioning National Blue Alert Network may have prevented some of these unnecessary deaths.

WILLIAM J. JOHNSON, CAE
Executive Director and
General Counsel

The National Blue Alert Network allows the federal government to support state and local law enforcement as they work to develop and implement Blue Alert emergency systems in their states. It also supports the 27 states that currently have Blue Alert systems integrate into a coordinated national framework.

A dedicated EAS event code for Blue Alerts would facilitate and streamline the adoption of new Blue Alert plans in the remaining 23 states and will help integrate all Blue Alert systems into the National Blue Alert Network. The lack of a dedicated Blue Alert EAS event code is one of the main obstacles to states adopting and using Blue Alert plans. With the number of law enforcement officer assaults, injuries, and deaths increasing sharply in recent years, a functioning National Blue Alert Network, with all states participating, is vital for the protection of our nation's law enforcement officers.


Further, the absence of an EAS event code for Blue Alerts would require state and local law enforcement to utilize an existing generic Law Enforcement Warning (LEW) event code in an ad hoc manner. The LEW code is usually used for routine informational purposes such as hazardous road conditions and road closures; it is not typically used for warnings on immediate threats to law enforcement. Thus, they are not always taken with the urgency needed for a Blue Alert by law enforcement agencies, the media and the public.

A dedicated Blue Alert event code would also allow for the promulgation of specific rules to ensure that Blue Alerts are handled in a specific manner by participating media outlets and wireless carriers.

It is for these reasons that NAPO urges the FCC to issue a dedicated EAS event code for Blue Alerts to keep our officers and our communities safe from violent criminals who have threatened to kill, killed or seriously injured a law enforcement officer.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments and concerns. If NAPO can provide any additional information on our comments, please feel free to contact me at: (703) 549-0775.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'William J. Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William J. Johnson
Executive Director